

Heresy!

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"STEPS IN OVERCOMING MASTURBATION" by Mark E. Petersen

Council of the 12 Apostles

Be assured that you can be cured of your difficulty. Many have been, both male and female, and you can be also if you determine that it must be so.

This determination is the first step. That is where we begin. You must decide that you will end this practice, and when you make that decision, the problem will be greatly reduced at once.

But it must be more than a hope or a wish, more than knowing that it is good for you. It must be actually a DECISION. If you truly make up your mind that you will be cured, then you will have the strength to resist any tendencies which you may have and any temptations which may come to you.

After you have made this decision, then observe the following specific guidelines:

A Guide to Self-Control:

- **1. Never touch the intimate parts of your body except during normal toilet processes.**
- **2. Avoid being alone as much as possible. Find good company and stay in this good company.**
- **3. If you are associated with other persons having this same problem, YOU MUST BREAK OFF THEIR FRIENDSHIP. Never associate with other people having the same weakness. Don't suppose that two of you will quit together, you never will. You must get away from people of that kind. Just to be in their presence will keep your problem foremost in your mind. The problem must be taken OUT OF YOUR MIND for that is where it really exists. Your mind must be on other and more wholesome things.**
- **4. When you bathe, do not admire yourself in a mirror. Never stay in the bath more than five or six minutes -- just long enough to bathe and dry and dress AND THEN GET OUT OF THE BATHROOM into a room where you will have some member of your family present.**
- **5. When in bed, if that is where you have your problem for the most part, dress yourself for the night so securely that you cannot easily touch your vital parts, and so that it would be difficult and time consuming for you to remove those clothes. By the time you started to remove protective clothing you would have sufficiently controlled your thinking that the temptation would leave you.**
- **6. If the temptation seems overpowering while you are in bed, GET OUT OF BED AND GO INTO THE KITCHEN AND FIX YOURSELF A SNACK, even if it is in the middle of the night, and even if you are not hungry, and despite your fears of gaining weight. The purpose behind this suggestion is that you GET YOUR MIND ON SOMETHING ELSE. You are the subject of your thoughts, so to speak.**
- **7. Never read pornographic material. Never read about your problem. Keep it out of mind. Remember - "First a thought, then an act." The thought pattern must be changed. You must not allow this problem to remain in your mind. When you accomplish that, you soon will be free of the act.**

- 8. Put wholesome thoughts into your mind at all times. Read good books -- Church books -- Scriptures - Sermons of the Brethren [sic, Cistern too?]. Make a daily habit of reading at least one chapter of Scripture, preferably from one of the four Gospels in the New Testament, or the Book of Mormon. The four Gospels -- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John -- above anything else in the Bible can be helpful because of their uplifting qualities.
- 9. Pray. But when you pray, don't pray about this problem, for that will tend to keep [it] in your mind more than ever. Pray for faith, pray for understanding of the Scriptures, pray for the Missionaries, the General Authorities, your friends, your families, BUT KEEP THE PROBLEM OUT OF YOUR MIND BY NOT MENTIONING IT EVER -- NOT IN CONVERSATION WITH OTHERS, NOT IN YOUR PRAYERS. KEEP IT _OUT_ of your mind!

The attitude of a person toward his problem has an affect [sic] on how easy it is to overcome. It is essential that a firm commitment be made to control the habit. As a person understands his reasons for the behavior, and is sensitive to the conditions or situations that may trigger a desire for the act, he develops the power to control it.

We are taught that our bodies are temples of God, and are to be clean so that the Holy Ghost may dwell within us. Masturbation is a sinful habit that robs one of the Spirit and creates guilt and emotional stress. It is not physically harmful unless practiced in the extreme. It is a habit that is totally self-centered, and secretive, and in no way expresses the proper use of the procreative power given to man to fulfill eternal purposes. It therefore separates a person from God and defeats the gospel plan.

This self-gratifying activity will cause one to lose his self-respect testimony becomes weak, and missionary work and other Church callings become burdensome, offerings.

To help in planning an effective program to overcome the problem a briation is given of how the reproductive organs in a young man function.

The testes in your body are continually producing hundreds of millions the _vas deferens_ to a place called the _ampulla_ where they are mixed with fluids from two membranous pouches called _seminal vesicles_ and the _prostate gland_.

It is normal for the vesicles to be emptied occasionally at night during the emptying of come from the cetral nervous system. Often an erotic dream is experienced at the same time, and is a part of this normal process. Instead ourse, the reproductive system is operating at a more rapid pace, trying to keep up with the loss of semen. When he stops the habit, the body will continue to produce at his increased rate.

As one meets with his Priesthood Leader, a program for overcoming masturbation can be implemented using some of t Remember it is essential that a regular report program be agreed on, so progress can be recognized and failures understood and eliminated.

Suggestions

- 1. Pray daily, ask for the gifts of the Spirit, that which will strengthen you against temptation. Pray fervently and not lout when the temptations are the strongest.
- 2. Follow a program of vigorous daily exercise. The exercises reduce emotional tension and depression and are absolutely basic to the solution of this problem. Double your physical activity when you feel stress increasing.
- 3. When the temptation to masturbate is strong, yell _STOP_ to those thoughts as loudly as you can in your mind and then recite a prechosen Scripture or sing an inspirational hymn. It is important to turn your thoughts away from the selfish need to indulge.

- 4. Set goals of abstinence, begin with a day, then a week, month, year and finally commit to never doing it again. Until you commit yourself to never again you will always be open to temptation.
- 5. Change in behavior and attitude is most easily achieved through a changed self-image. Spend time every day imagining yourself strong and in control, easily overcoming tempting situations.
- 6. Begin to work daily on a self-improvement program. Relate this plan to improving your Church service, to improving your relationships with your family, God and others. Strive to enhance your strengths and talents.
- 7. Be outgoing and friendly. Force yourself to be with others and learn to enjoy working and talking to them. Use principles of developing friendships found in books such as How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie.
- 8. Be aware of situations that depress you or that cause you to feel lonely, bored, frustrated or discouraged. These emotional states can trigger the desire to masturbate as a way of escape. Plan in advance to counter these low periods through various activities, such as reading a book, visiting a friend, doing something athletic, etc.
- 9. Make a pocket calendar for a month on a small card. Carry it with you, but show it to no one. If you have a lapse of self control, color the day black. Your goal will be to have no black days. The calendar becomes a strong visual reminder of self control and should be looked at when you are tempted to add another black day. Keep your calendar up until you have at least three clear months.
- 10. A careful study will indicate you have had the problem at certain times and under certain conditions. Try and recall, in detail, what your particular times and conditions were. Now that you understand how it happens, plan to break the pattern through counter activities.
- 11. In the field of psychotherapy there is a very effective technique called aversion therapy. When we associate or think of something very distasteful with something which has been pleasurable, but undesirable, the distasteful thought and feeling will begin to cancel out that which was pleasurable. If you associate something very distasteful with your loss of self-control it will help you to stop the act. For example, if you are tempted to masturbate, think of having to bathe in a tub of worms, and eat several of them as you do the act.
- 12. During your toileting and shower activities leave the bathroom door or shower curtain partly open, to discourage being alone in total privacy. Take cool brief showers.
- 13. Arise immediately in the mornings. Do not lie in bed awake, no matter what time of day it is. Get up and do something. Start each day with an enthusiastic activity.
- 14. Keep your bladder empty. Refrain from drinking large amounts of fluids before retiring.
- 15. Reduce the amount of spices and condiments in your food. Eat as lightly as possible at night.
- 16. Wear pajamas that are difficult to open, yet loose and not binding.
- 17. Avoid people, situations, pictures or reading materials that might create sexual excitement.
- 18. It is sometimes helpful to have a physical object to use in overcoming this problem. A Book of Mormon, firmly held in hand, even in bed at night has proven helpful in extreme cases.
- 19. In very severe cases it may be necessary to tie a hand to the bed frame with a tie in order that the habit of masturbating in a semi-sleep condition can be broken. This can also be accomplished by wearing several layers of clothing which would be difficult to remove while half asleep.
- 20. Set up a reward system for your successes. It does not have to be a big reward. A quarter in a

receptacle each time you overcome or reach a goal. Spend it on something which delights you and will be a continuing reminder of your progress.

- **21. Do not let yourself return to any past habit or attitude patterns which were part of your problem. Satan Never Gives Up. Be calmly and confidently on guard. Keep a positive mental attitude. You can win this fight! The joy and strength you will feel when you do will give your whole life a radiant and spiritual glow of satisfaction and fulfillment.**

Yours forever in Christ,

Paul C. Preffen

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